

## Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, February 11, 1838, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, February 11, 1838.

. . . . You will have seen Rives' Bill with Surprise, after what I have written you.<sup>1</sup> He has been playing a deep, hypocritical game. He came into

<sup>1</sup> The subtreasury, or independent treasury, scheme, which Jackson called the "divorce bill" because it would divorce the government from the banks, came up first in the special session of 1837, where it failed. It was brought up again in the regular session, coming from the Senate committee on finance, of which Silas Wright was chairman. It provided for keeping the public money in the Treasury at Washington and in four subtreasuries in other cities. It was introduced in the Senate Jan. 16, 1838. On Feb. 2, 1838, Senator Rives of Virginia introduced a substitute providing for the selection by Congress of twenty-five state banks in which the public money would be deposited. Rives's scheme was supported by the friends of the defunct Bank of the United States, seemingly on the ground that it would prolong the existing state of confusion and eventually make it easy to recharter the Bank. The substitute failed to pass the Senate on Mar. 31 by a vote of 29 to 20. After some amendment Wright's bill passed the Senate Mar. 24, 1838, by a vote of 27 to 25, but did not pass the House. In 1840, however, it was carried through both Houses and became a law.

our caucuses, declared his willingness to unite with the party in support of its measure, modified in certain particulars. If this could not be done to suit him, without sacrificing principle or the general wish of the Democrats, he would give his vote according to his

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conscience and end with it, all schism with his friends. This seeming sympathy with his old friends was designed to favor his assertions in the Virginia Legislature. It gave him open access to our honest and unsuspecting friends and he has improved it to poison them by delusive and one sided views. He has led some off in search of a compromise and having separated them from the scheme of the administration, he has taken himself a ground to rally the whole opposition on his proposition, leaving us to heal the divisions his pretended compromise sowed in our ranks, in the best way we can. His abandonment you perceive, has left Ritchie like Mahomets Coffin, hanging in the air. It is so with some others in the Legislature, but I have hopes that they will agree in main points and condemn Rives' ground of coalition with the enemy. He is now fairly in Judge Whites shoes. Both he and Talmadge have already made bitterer speeches against Mr. Van Buren's policy, than old White ever did against you or yours. Talmadge's particularly was distinguished for its shameful falsehoods. As soon as he writes it out I will expose his scandalous want of truth at every step. I will unmask Rives, too, when he puts out his carried over, treacherous Speech, which is designed to lead the way to a complete union with Federalism and the adoption of a plan which must lead to the reestablishment of a National Bank.

I send you the first number of the Extra Globe. In the Introduction, I open up some views which I mean to expatiate on in future numbers in regard to his scheme. Writing it hastily to anticipate his speech it is not full. The able Exposition which follows the first article, is from Kendalls pen. I send you some dozen "*prospectuses*" that you may send them under your frank to certain leading friends in Tennessee, to prompt them to have the Extra circulated. I mean to give it a Tennessee aspect, for your sake and that of the Cause. Bell and White may be put down in Tennessee, if there be any Republican virtue extant. Old White was made chairman of a federal feast at Brown's last night, given to Prentiss,<sup>2</sup> at which Webster and Clay were the Orators. Old White "*spoke daggers*" against you and his former friends. I am told that he said in the bitterness of his soul he repented that he had ever been a Jackson-man. The old reptile forgets, that but for this, he would not have

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had the opportunity to betray Tennessee. In truth however the hypocrite never had any real Jacksonism to repent of. He was always the federal rogue he now is.

2 S. S. Prentiss, M. C. from Mississippi 1838–1839.

I learn this Evening, that the House of Reps. of Pennsylvania, have by a single vote instructed Buchannan to vote for Rives' Bill. Seven men of our side, representing strong Democratic counties have been bought over. Gilmore, who proposed it, just before the meeting of the Legislature, had pressed Beatty<sup>3</sup> (the Congressman from the district) to send him

3 William Beatty, M. C. 1837–1841.

documents that he might make a *powerful effect in favor of the Independent Treasury Bill* ! He spent the Holy days in Philada. and Biddle fixed him. The rest, as well as himself, like Burden, Penrose<sup>4</sup> and Co. were doubtless bribed. I think in the end, this villany will do good. The people in the counties will probably rise and give counter Instructions.

4 Charles B. Penrose, at this time a member of the Pennsylvania senate.

We are all well but my wife, who was thrown from her Horse and had her arm broken three weeks ago above the elbow. It is doing well, and she says she will ride the rascal again, whom she petted into the spirit of kicking up his heels and throwing her off in two heats. To this I demur. She and all send our love to yourself and family. Eliza says kiss each of your nest of Doves, for her.

I am affectionately Yr friend